

Central Intelligence Agency

Washington, D.C. 20505
DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

25 January 1985

**Australia-New Zealand Relations:
 A Distancing Over Nuclear Issues** [redacted]

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Summary

The ascendancy to office of a fellow Labor government in New Zealand last July has paradoxically led Prime Minister Bob Hawke to loosen trans-Tasman ties. This distancing stems from Australian dismay over the antinuclear policies of Prime Minister Lange's government, particularly its ban on port calls by nuclear ships. Hawke believes Lange's unyielding stance threatens the ANZUS relationship with the United States and also encourages antinuclear agitation from the left wing of his own Labor Party. At present, Australia, despite a consuming interest in a resolution of the port access issue, sees it as essentially a bilateral US-New Zealand problem. Canberra will continue to consult with Washington but will hold back from any approaches to Wellington that could be taken as interference. [redacted]

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The View From Canberra

Australia has an intense interest in a successful outcome of the ship visit and ANZUS issues posed by Wellington's policies. Canberra believes that failure to find a resolution could at worst spell the end of this trilateral alliance, which it believes vital to its national security. After his first meeting with Lange after the New Zealand election, Hawke told the press that failure to resolve the ship access issue would force an Australian "reappraisal" of ANZUS--a comment that fed press speculation that Canberra might feel pushed to seek its own bilateral relationship with the United States. Although Hawke

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DOE review completed. [redacted]

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has dismissed such speculation as premature, Lange's failure since his election to show any give in his stand has kept it alive. [redacted]

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Even assuming that ANZUS can be preserved, slowness in finding a solution to the ship visit issue causes strains in Australian-New Zealand relations and raises problems in Australian internal politics. Wellington's antinuclear stand has particularly encouraged the antinuclear movement in Australia--a development that already has cost Hawke politically. The surprising popularity in the December Australian federal election of the hastily organized Nuclear Disarmament Party was at least partly a result of the stimulation of Australian antinuclear sentiment by events in New Zealand. [redacted]

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The issue also is encouraging movements in several Australian states to limit US naval ship visits. In Western Australia, the state most often visited, there is pressure within the governing state Labor Party to reduce the frequency of port calls. US ship visits have long been controversial in two other states--New South Wales and Victoria. No US naval ships have called at Sydney in years, and in 1982 the new state Labor government in Victoria--pushed by its strong left wing--imposed a port ban--later overruled by the then Liberal-National coalition federal government. An extended hiatus in US ship visits to New Zealand is especially likely to add fuel to these local Australian initiatives. [redacted]

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Prolonged debate of the issue also could damage the prestige of Hawke and Foreign Minister Hayden, who have defended active military cooperation with the United States as essential to Australia's security. Both are personally committed to continuation of US ship visits to Australia, having reaffirmed this position after Canberra's review of the ANZUS alliance after the Labor victory in 1983. Hawke, whose image as a "statesman" should have influence on his fellow and junior New Zealand

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counterpart, is particularly vulnerable should the New Zealanders continue to have their way. He is currently being subjected to opposition carping over his failure to put pressure on Lange. Hayden, having been forced by Hawke in 1982 to retreat from his position of opposing ship visits, also does not relish renewed attention to the subject. [redacted]

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The View From Wellington

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Australian annoyance with Wellington is obvious to all but the New Zealanders. Hayden, commenting last week on prospects for a New Zealand port call by a US ship involved in the ANZUS Sea Eagle exercise in the Tasman Sea in March, expressed impatience with New Zealand, saying the time had come for it to clarify its position on nuclear warships. [redacted]

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Canberra, nevertheless, finds it politically imperative to take a low-key approach to Wellington. The New Zealanders are quick to see as patronizing any attempt by their larger neighbor to discuss bilateral issues. [redacted]

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[redacted] Neither can Hawke, already criticized by some of his countrymen as being overly accommodating to the United States, risk having his government being seen as carrying messages for Washington. [redacted]

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Original--OEA/SEA/IB
1--OEA/SEA/ITM
1--CH/OEA/SEAD
1--DC/OEA/SEAD
1--PDB (7F30)
1--C/NIC (7E62)
1--NIO/EA (7E62)
5--CPAS/IMC/CB (7G07)
1--C/PES/DDI (7F24)
1--DDI (7E44)
1--DCI (7D60)
1--DDCI (7D6011)
1--
1--
1--D/OEAA (4F18)
1--Executive Director (7E12)
1--CPAS/ILS (7G215)
1--OEA/NEA (4G43)
1--OEA/CH (4G32)
1--
1--
1--OEA/Research Director (4G48)

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Outside:

Commerce:

1--Byron Jackson

Defense:

1--LTC James Riordan
1--Stewart Ring
1--Jay Sloan
1--Jim Kelly

NSC:

1--Richard Childress
1--David Laux
1--Gaston Sigur

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State:

1--William Brown
1--RAFM Jonathan Howe
1--Allan Kitchens
1--Jon Glassman
1--Frank Tatu

Treasury:

1--Douglas Mulholland

Federal Reserve:

1--Ken Taylor

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